Outcome of PM's recent visit to Russia, Central Asia and Syria

*54. SHRI S. AGNIRAJ: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the primary policy decisions taken during the recent visit of the Prime Minister and his delegation to Russia, Central Asia and Syria;

(b) the number of treaties/agreements signed;

(c) the main areas covered under these agreements; and

(d) the major benefits to the country from these joint declaration?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) to (d) Russian Federation:

(i) The visit of Hon'ble Prime Minister to Russia from 11-13 November 2003 was in accordance with the practice of holding annual summits with the Russian Federation, a mechanism which has contributed to consolidation of strategic partnership between India and Russia. During his discussions with the President of the Russian Federation H.E. Mr. Vladimir Putin, the whole gamut of bilateral relations and topical international issues were discussed. It was agreed that the close, mutually beneficial and multi-dimensional cooperation between the two countries should be further developed in areas of mutual interest, in particular trade and investment. Mechanisms for enhancing our trade and investment with Russia were discussed. The two countries agreed to continue their close cooperation on international issues of mutual concern and interest, including on the issue of dealing with new threats and challenges such as international terrorism.

(ii) During the visit of Prime Minister to Russia, the following documents were signed in the Kremlin on 12 November 2003:

i. Agreement between the Government of the State of Andhra Pradesh of the Republic of India and the Government of the Republic of Tatarstan on the Russian Federation on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation.

ii. Agreement on Scientific Cooperation and Scientific Exchange between the Indian National Science Academy and the Russian Academy of Sciences.

iii. Protocol on Scientific Cooperation between the Department of Science and Technology of the Government of the Republic of India and the Russian Academy of Science.

iv. Memorandum of Understanding between Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and Russian Aviation and Space Agency (Rosavikosmos) on Cooperation in Exploration and Use of Outer Space for Peaceful Purposes.

v. Protocol between the Ministry of External Affairs of the Republic of India and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation on Joint Publication of Bilateral Archive (Diplomatic) Documents.

vi. Memorandum of Understanding between Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (ECGC) of India Ltd. And Vneshtorgbank (VTB).

vii. Declaration of the Republic of India and the Russian Federation on Global Challenges and Threats to World Security and Stability.

viii. Report on the Implementation of Steps Enunciated in the Joint Declaration on Strengthening and Enhancing Economic, Scientific and Technological Cooperation signed during the visit of President of the Russian Federation H.E. Mr. Vladimir Putin to India in December 2002.

Besides, two Memoranda of Understanding between Department of Science and Technology and the Russian Academy of Sciences on the establishment of joint science centres on the study on gas hydrates and on seismology in India were also signed in the Russian Academy of Sciences on 12 November 2003.

(iii) The main areas covered under these agreements/documents are international relations, sicence and technology, space, cooperation between Foreign Ministries of the two countries, cooperation between regions/republics of the Russian Federation and states of India, and banking.

(iv) The documents signed in the areas of science and technology, space and banking are aimed at developing fruitful bilateral

cooperation in specific directions. The agreement on cooperation between the Republic of Tatarstan of the Russian Federation and the State of Andhra Pradesh will augment cooperation between regions of India and the Russian Federation by promoting direct links in the areas of trade, industry, education, science and technology, culture, etc. The Protocol on joint publication of bilateral archival documents by the Foreign Ministries of the two countries is expected to provide a valuable record and reference material comprising all important documents signed between the two countries. The Declaration by India and the Russian Federation on Global Challenges and Threats to World Security and Stability outlines the vision of the two countries about the challenges which the world faces in the 21st century and also reiterates their commitment to cooperate in effectively dealing with the threats from international terrorism, illicit trafficking of drugs and arms and organized crime, and other developmental and environmental challenges.

Tajikistan:

(i) PM visited Tajikistan on 13-14 November, 2003. The policy decision taken during the visit include reiteration of our commitment to further develop and diversify India's relations with Tajikistan. PM made an announcement of a financial package of US$ 40 million to be extended by Government of India to Government of Tajikistan. PM also announced a gift of ten buses for the transport system of the City of Dushanbe. A Joint Declaration was siged by Prime Minister of India and President of Tajikistan. It mentioned, *inter alia,* Tajikistan's support for India's membership to the restructured UNSC and to the membership of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).

(ii) Seven agreements/protocols were signed during PM's visit to Tajikistan. These are:

i. Treaty on Extradition;

ii. Agreement on Exemption of Visa Requirements for Holders of Diplomatic Passports;

iii. Agreement on Cooperation in the field of Tourism;

iv. MOU on Establishment of Indo-Tajik Centre for Information Technology;

v. MOU on Cooperation in Informational Technology and Services.

vi. Protocol on exchange of Instrument of Ratification of Agreement on Encouragement and Protection of Investments; and

vii. Protocol on exchange of Instrument of Ratification of Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters.

In addition, a Joint Declaration on Friendship and Cooperation was also signed.

(iii) Both India and Tajikistan will benefit from the implementation of these agreements. For example, the Treaty of Extradition will allow either country the possibility to seek extradition of the persons staying in the other country, for instituting criminal proceedings or executing the sentence for the crime committed by them in either country. Under the Treaty of Tourism, cooperation between official tourism bodies, respective enterprises, tour operations, travel agents and hotel chains between the two countries will be possible. It will encourage investment in the field of tourism. Both countries will also be in a position to send to each other cultural troupes, artists, artisans, chefs and other persons relating to tourism promotion. Similarly, the Agreement on Visa Requirement will allow diplomatic passport holders from India for visa free travel. Both the MOUs on Information Technology will provide unique opportunity to India's IT sector and professionals for out-reach to Tajikistan. The Protocol on Exchange of Instrument of Ratification of the Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters will help India to seek legal assistance in case of crimes committed in India by International criminals and terrorists. Similarly, the Protocol on the Exchange of Instrument of Ratification on Encouragement and Protection of Investments will facilitate and protect India's investment in Tajikistan.

The Joint Declaration between India and Tajikistan commit both the countries to develop bilateral relations based on universally recognized principles and norms of international law. It contains Tajikistan's reaffirmation of the support of India to promote and

strengthen international peace and security, including mutual understanding and cooperation in South Asia. The Declaration also conveys the support of Government of Tajikistan to India's candidature for permanent membership in the expanded UNSC. It also mentions that India's membership of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) would add to the strength of that organization.

Syria:

(i) PM made a State Visit to Syria on November 14-16, 2003. During the visit, a comprehensive exchange of views on bilateral, regional and internationals issues took place. A line of credit of US$ 25 million by India to Syria was offered for development of bilateral trade. Both sides decided to set up a Joint Hydrocarbon Committee in view of the potential for cooperation in hydrocarbon sector. Prime Minister and the Syrian President jointly inaugurated the Syrian Biotechnology Centre established with the Indian assistance. Prime Minister announced a special grant of US Dollar one million to assist implementation of the agreed programme of cooperation in the Biotechnology sector. The two sides also decided to double their bilateral trade by 2005.

(ii) The following nine documents on bilateral cooperation were signed during Syria visit by the Prime Minister:

i. Executive Programme for Cultural Cooperation;

ii. Memorandum of Understanding for Cooperation in Information Technology and Services.

iii. Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperaiton in the field of Agricultural and allied Sectors;

iv. Memorandum of Understanding on Technical Cooperaiton;

v. Exchange Programme in the field of Education;

vi. Cultural Cooperation Agreement between the Arab Writers Union in Syrian Arab Republic and the Sahitya Academy in India;

vii. Agreement of Mutual Cooperation between National Small Industries Corporation, India and Ministry of Industry of Syrain Arab Republic;

viii. Executive Work Plan: Department of Biotechnology, Government of Republic of India and the Ministry of Higher Education, Syrian Arab Republic; and

ix. Programme of Cooperation in Science & Technology.

(iii) These nine documents signed will provide India with a sectoral framework in the respective fields for upgradation of our relations with Syria.

'Backward District Initiative' programme in Orissa

*55. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Centre has approved a special package for development of seven district of Orissa under the 'Backward District Initiative Programme'; and

(b) if so, the details of the areas so covered in the State under the above programme and Central assistance provided for the purpose to each of the block?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI SATYABRATA MOOKHERJEE):(a) Seven districts of Orissa, namely, Malkangiri, Ganjam, Koraput, Gajapati, Rayagada, Nawrangpur and Mayurbhanj have been identified as extremist affected.

(b) As four districts, namely, Malkangiri, Koraput, Rayagada and Nawrangpur are covered under the Special Plan for the undivided Koraput-Bolangir-Kalahandi (KBK) districts being funded under the Rashtriya Sam Vikas Yojana, the remaining three districts, namely, Ganjam, Mayurbhanj and Gajapati are being covered under the Backward Districts Initiative also being funded as a separate component under the Rashtriya Sam Vikas Yojana. These three districts will be allocated Rs.15 crore each per year for three years *i.e.* Rs. 45 crore. During the current year, Rs.15 crore each has been allocated for Ganjam and Mayurbhanj districts in addition to the Rs.250 crore allocated for the Special Plan for the eight districts included in the undivided KBK districts of Orissa.